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[Around South County: Holiday song encourages people to 'Play it Forward'](#)

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Edgewater resident Dana Clark launched a unique effort in 2009 that continues to grow, spreading goodwill and a touching reminder of the true meaning of the holidays.

The message is carried by a holiday song available for download online. There is no cost, no catch, not even an email address required at www.CarolforaCause.com, just encouraging words about hope, love, belief - and a request to "play it forward."

Clark had never written a song before, but was inspired by the strong emotions she felt soon after she learned her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She wrote "Christmas Time" sitting in a shopping mall one afternoon, reflecting on the true meaning of the holiday.

She brought the lyrics to her good friend, Dana Robinson, an accomplished singer/songwriter, and before long, they were in a recording studio.

Robinson (maiden name Stillinger) had traveled at 18 with Up With People. After college, she went back on the road with UWP as a show manager/vocal instructor, then eventually won a vocalist position in the U.S. Navy, went to boot camp, and spent five years stationed at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, where she met her husband and fellow musician, Jeremy Robinson. She now lives in Calvert County where she is part of the Music and Arts team at a local church and uses music as an outreach tool through her band, Scattered Leaves (www.myspace.com/scatteredleavesmusic).

Robinson wrote the music for "Christmas Time" and brings her strong, beautiful voice to the recording. The final song is full of emotion, and yet very tender and touching.

From the many comments left on the website, the song clearly leaves many with a warm, positive, hopeful feeling - exactly what Clark had hoped for. She explains, "My first inspiration was to write this song. My second was to not promote a particular charity or cause. We decided that we want as many people as possible to listen to and share this song."

For Clark, this is definitely a labor of love. She and a growing group of friends have poured their time, money and talents into creating the recording, several videos, a website and now an ongoing effort to build fans and followers online. While Carol for a Cause does look for sponsorship, Clark is adamant that all funds and gifts-in-kind go directly to the promotional effort. There is no other overhead.

Says Clark, "My hope is that this song will inspire people to do something nice for someone during the holiday season. Support a cause that is important to you, or 'Play it Forward' and pass on the song or our website to spread goodwill to family and friends. That's all - but if enough people do just that, the world will be a far better place."

Since the site first went live in November 2009, thousands of people have downloaded the song. And clearly it has taken on personal meaning for some.

One touching video on YouTube was created by a member of the military who combined the "Christmas Time" song with a series of photos he had taken while serving in Iraq.

This effort has inspired a contest that will be part of the 2010 promotion. Anyone can submit a video or photo of what the song means to them, enter their own rendition of "Christmas Time," or even submit a whole new song.

The best video or photo will win a \$2,500 prize; \$1,250 cash and \$1,250 for the charity of their choice. For details, or to download "Christmas Time," go to www.carolforacause.com.

Cut Loose Hair Salon, located at 200 Mayo Road in Edgewater, held its first Cut-A-Thon Oct. 24 to raise money for the fight against breast cancer and lymphoma.

One hundred percent of all proceeds was given to the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer and to the American Cancer Society.

The owners of Cut Loose, Jan Wisooker and Kelley Burcham, headed the event and got

local businesses to contribute gift certificates and services to raffle.

The salon had an overwhelming response from people who got haircuts with a minimum of a \$15 donation - although most were even more generous.

All the stylists from Cut Loose and Wisooker's other salon, Hair and Things in Beltsville, donated their time and skills to raise money for a cause that affects so many. A stylist from a salon in Annapolis donated her time as well.

Outside, there was face painting by a local artist who owns Painterly Designs. A representative from Remax donated his time to talk with anyone who needed his services; he even brought his Remax moon bounce to entertain the children.

Lou's corner store in Mayo donated food, drinks and employees to help out at the event. BootsBubba BBQ sold roasted pork sandwiches, hot dogs and chips and donated all the proceeds for both causes.

There also was a bake sale that raised more than \$1,000 that was donated to the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer.

Joker Entertainment, a local DJ, donated their time to entertain with music and some karaoke.

Bunny Burkett, the legendary funny car driver, made her Burnout Breast Cancer car available for display along with Derek Town's Pro Mod car. Burkett had planned to attend but could not make it due to a medical emergency. She is an advocate for breast cancer and has also raised money for the cause.

Cedar Grove Preschool is looking for crafters and yard sale participants for its Nov. 6 craft show and soup, bake and yard sale at the Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, 5965 Deale Churchton Road in Deale.

The sale will be from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall and Education Center.

Interested crafters should call 410-867-9345. If interested in a yard sale table, call 410-867-2818 or 410-867-2978.

Proceeds benefit Cedar Grove Preschool and ministries.

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